

EXCITEMENT CITY UNLIMITED



#11

Circulation 89

July 10th, 1988

I'm tired

I was going to launch into an explanation as to why this issue was only twelve pages long. Unfortunately I can't because for some not readily apparent reason, despite the fact that it is only a day after the deadline, I've managed to crank out sixteen pages. Enjoy this issue. There may not be another like it.

Life has been as hectic as usual though. I've spent most evenings listening to REM on the headphones while boning up on algebra for the GMAT. Ah, Bruce Geryk would be proud of me...

I seem to have five main priorities in life at present. Apart from Barbara, they are work, education, social life and the zine. Juggling all five is a bit of a pain. Perhaps I should narrow them down to only four? I only managed to type sixteen pages of zine this month because we didn't bother to go out this weekend. However I don't intend to cut out my social life for just a zine. Yup, work will have to go...

Several of you will be receiving this issue at World Dip Con so that I can save on postage. One or two of you will be Americans visiting Britain for the convention. (Hi, Fred Davis, John Crosby, Claude Gautron, and Larry Peery.) You may be encountering a little culture shock. Apart from trying to impress on you that you should remember to look the other way before you cross the road, I have a few helpful comparisons for you should you wish to buy some British chocolates.

Although they may look the same, British chocolates are often subtly different from American candy. For starters the British Mars Bar does not contain almonds like its American cousin. It also comes in a wrapper which the same design but red on black instead of red on yellow. In fact the British Mars is just the American Milky Way but larger. While the British Milky Way is like the American Three Musketeers but smaller. The American Snickers bar comes in the same brown wrapper and contains the same peanuts but it's called Marathon. Finally if you fancy a Mounds bar it's in a blue wrapper (not red) and the name is Bounty.

Confused? I certainly was when I first came to America, bit into a Mars and nearly broke my tooth on an almond...

EXCITEMENT CITY UNLIMITED is a poorly titled piece of ephemera published by Simon Billenness and Barbara Passoff who live at: 630 Victory Blvd. Apt 6F, Staten Island, NY 10301, USA. ECU costs you 75¢ if you live in North or South America. All others pay \$1 to receive this airmail. Meat is Murder.

THE KOOKINESS OF NEW YORK: PART ONE (of several, I'm sure)

Recently I've been spending one evening a week at preparation classes for the GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test), which I have to excell in if I want to go on to do an MBA. The teaching is presented well and I've learnt a great deal already. Both teachers are quite a wit and during a break one of them described a couple of the classes held by an organisation called The Learning Annex.

"Directly below us they have a class where the teacher goes into a trance and they sit around listening to a man who lived 5000 years ago. It was formerly entitled "Spiritualism" but now it's called "Transchannelling". My only question is, what's the point in talking to dead people? What if they don't have anything interesting to say? I mean I find it difficult communicating with somebody who's twenty years younger but 5000 years..."

Further along from that class, they have "Sexual Secrets of the Orient". I see we're all adults here, so we could discuss this, but, come on, do you really think they know something that we don't already? There is a story that they filmed this class for a programme once and when they panned the audience, everyone held sheets of paper over their faces. I could imagine an interview with one of them. "Please don't show my face on TV! My mother thinks the money is for a computer class."

Maybe the Learning Annex people have the last laugh. For some reason fewer people pay to bone up on the GMAT than pay to listen to dead people."

The Learning Annex runs hundreds of fluffy (and some not so fluffy) classes in the Manhattan area. For the money oriented there are several courses on how to open bookstores, start a bridal consultancy and, for the ambitious, how to make money fast in real estate. There's silk-screening, a shower singers' workshop and "How to paint...your clothes". Finally there is also Swedish and Shiatsu massage, "How to flirt" and "Career Opportunities in the Adult Entertainment Industry", if you've become bored with the secrets of the Orient.

However my favourite is the course "How to strip for your man" which hastily specifies "for women only".

I BETTER FINISH THIS SOON BECAUSE IT'S LATE AND I HAVE TO GO TO THE PRINTER TOMORROW AND GETT

A welcome new addition to the ranks of publishers is Mark Lilleleht who's put out the first issue of The Scribblerist. (You can see him touting for subscribers on the last page of this issue's letter column.) Mark has produced a pretty typical first issue in which he opens a few waiting lists, chats about music, himself and his studies, a little moderate to liberal politics and the Runestone Poll. (OK, I lost myself in that last sentence but it's late and you got the drift.)

Mark says he originally intended something "well organised and very structured" like ECU, but that he'll probably end up with something informal like Vertigo, which I reckon is a fine role model. Anyway the zine has openings (albeit tentative ones) for Gunboat, Everybody Plays Dip, Snowball Fighting, United and, of course, two games of regular Dip. He reckons the whole caboodle will cost \$4.50 for the issues. Recommended.

Mark Lilleleht, PO Box 3166, Charlottesville, VA 22903-0166, USA

AROUND THE HOBBY

The North American/Australian link of the International Subscription Exchange is up and working. So far \$40 US has been transferred to Australia and \$34 Aust. has made its way to US and Canadian publishers. Beowulf is the popular Australian zine and ECU is the most popular North American zine. Shock horror...

Beowulf and Victoriana are the two Australian zines I trade for. They're very similar in format: digest, xeroxed, 20-40 pages long, lots of games and a couple of short subzines. The Aussie hobby is very young and enthusiastic. There's virtually no trace of deadwood and a plug in either of these two publications invariably results in three or four subscriptions from Diggers eager to join games and write letters. The letter columns are wild and spontaneous. These people claim to have feuds but it's obvious that they're just bantering - no bad feelings seem to be involved. The current Beowulf comes with a cover of Prince Charles groping Di's left breast and is probably the most internationally-oriented of the pair. Victoriana is well worth a look, containing a more varied repertoire of games.

Ian Whitchurch wrote me a review of Envoy, which I don't see myself.

"The Envoy, Australia's premier dipzine, contains lots of games (20 at last count), a lively letter column with three amusing, ongoing feuds (Men's Liberation Front vs Kathy Sproat, Andrew England vs Harry Kolotas and Luke Clutterbuck vs Ken Sproat), lots of articles on strategy, negotiations etc, "The Bismarck Papers" (Arthur Bismarck: latest paper: "Diplomacy and the Mafia Connection"), Luke Clutterbuck's obscure quizzes AND The Envoy's own agony aunt, Dr Goldilox! Only A\$2 per issue (9 issues per year, approx. 64 pages per issue).

Beowulf and Victoriana are priced at \$1.50 each, though you will have to pay more, I'm sure, for airmail delivery. If anyone is interested in subscribing, all you have to do is send me a cheque and I'll have the many transferred through the ISE.

Beowulf: Andrew England, F1/96 South Road, Torrensville, SA 5031, Australia

Victoriana: John Cain, 76 Banool Road, Balwyn, 3103, Australia

The Envoy: Marion Ashworth, 25 Park Avenue, Roseville, 2069, Australia

Meanwhile in the States a whiff of feuding seems to have invaded the air. Mass mailings, feud subzines and Bad Boy "Pentagram" hoaxes are finding their way into hobbyists mailboxes. When opening your mail, keep a waste paper bin handy, guys.

The latest Zine Register is out after its standard four week delay. It's Ken Peel's best issue yet. He's managed to combine comprehensive information with a nice, laid-back writing style, which transforms the rather dry listings into an interesting read. Ken's recently received some flak from John Caruso in Foot in Mouth for editorialising about Bruce Geryk and co. I'm not sure why because Ken's remarks are extremely mild by comparison to what others have said about the Bad Boys. Besides Ken's comments are largely in response to Bruce Geryk's criticisms of the Zine Register; criticisms which Ken comments on fairly and uses to make some changes in the ZR, such as ensuring that all editor-submitted reviews are accurate. Personally I can't see why John criticises Ken at length while commenting favourably on Geryk's listing which distorts facts and insults people as a matter of course. If you want the best zine listing around, write to Ken Peel, 8708 First Ave, #T2, Silver Spring, MD 20910, enclosing 75¢ for one issue or \$1.50 for two.

les jeux

WILLIAM RUFUS DEVANE KING

AUTUMN 1910

Last season I neglected to print Persia's order "f egy-sms". Affected players were informed of this.

Retreats: Italian a mar-gas

Barbary Jake Walters

f wao-iri, f bre-eng, f por s f sao-mao, f sao-mao, a mor & a tun hold

France Jeff Hoffman

a par-bur

Germany Mike Pustilnik

a pie-tus, a ven s a pie-tus, a tyr s a ven, a gal-rum, a bud s a gal-rum,
a sev s a gal-rum, a ukr s a gal-rum, a sil-gal, a vie s a bud,
a mos-kaz, a geo-arm, a mun-bur, a ruh s a mun-bur, a mar s BARBARY...
...f por-spanc, f nth & f eng & f lon & f nwg all hold

Italy Robert Acheson

a spa-mar, a gas s a spa-mar, f tus-pie, a nap-rom, a apu-ven,
f adr s a apu-ven

Persia John Crosby

a ank-arm, a irq s a ank-arm, f con-bla, a irn-afg, a eth-irn,
f red & f ind c a eth-irn, f wms-gol, f sms-ion

Russia Bob Gossage

a ser s a rum-bud, a rum-bud, a bul-gre

Retreats: German a mar destroyed, Russian a rum-bul/otb

B: 7: mor,alg, can, por, lpl, bre, tun build one

F: 1: par no change

G: 20: kie, mun, ber, bel, vie, den, nwy, hol, edi, stp, pie, swe,
tri, ven, ion, war, sev, mos, +bud, +rum build three

I: 5: rom, nap, cor, gře, spa, mar remove one

P: 9: ara, jor, ira, eth, egy, smy, cre, ank-con no change

R: 3: rād, bād, ser, bul +gre no change or build one (hah! where?)

PRESS

Athens-Rome: I'm sorry but it was necessary.

Gamenotes

One player has proposed a concession to Germany. Please vote yes or no on this proposal.

Thanks to two players in particular after I mislaid their orders and had to call them for their orders again. You were very patient, guys.

DEADLINE: Saturday, August 13th 1988

RADIOFREEEUROPE PILGRIMAGE LAUGHING TALK ABOUT THE PASSION MORAL KIOSK PERFECT CIRCLE

independent deadline games

artichoke hearts: Cline 9 Person Diplomacy (International), Autumn 1902

braised celery: Downfall of the Lord of the Rings, see game report later

spectreman: Railway Rivals, Map K. Round 4.

attack of the killer tomatoes: Railway Rivals, Map N. Started.

frankie's freaks: Railway Rivals, Map T. See gamestart next page.

WAITING LISTS

Stab: Derwood Bowen, Glenn Petroski, Brad Wilson

Stab is an interesting hidden movement version of Diplomacy. Only contested moves are reported. Players have to keep track of their own units and guess about the whereabouts of their opponents'. This is not a game for paranoids! Player identities are common knowledge though. No gamefee. Rules available on request. Four wanted.

Railway Rushes: Paul Gardner, Doug Brown, Theo Clarke

Map I (Ireland) GM: Brian Longstaff 2 wanted. This is a RR variant

International Diplomacy: David Stone (Trinidad), Edward Ainsworth (UK), Ron Cameron (USA), Richard Biddle (Australia), John Piggott (UK), John Crosby (USA)

GM: Bob Gossage. Again no gamefee. One more player needed, preferably from Europe or Australasia. I intend to keep the International Dip lists open permanently by using outside GMs. The next game will probably be run by Mark Nelson.

Standbys: Cline 9: Jake Walters, Paul Gardner

International Dip: Bill Young, Martin Kloosterman, Robert Acheson, Mike Gonsalves, Ian Whitchurch

Downfall: John Dods, Mark Weseman, Ian Whitchurch, Jason Bergmann

All Purpose: Doug Brown, Mark Lilleleht, Mike Pustilnik

Railway Rivals: Paul Gardner

Standbys are always actively recruited. If you sign up as a standby you receive one free issue straight away (if I remember! Remind if I don't). If you submit standby orders which are used, you receive three further free issues. Join now! I especially need standbys from Europe and Australasia for my Cline 9 game!!!

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gamestart frankie's freaks RR

This should be the last Railway Rivals gamestart for a while, unless Brian decides to run some more games. (Or if I find another outside GM.) This game will be on Map T (Middle Earth). Addresses below:

Mark Nelson, 112 Huntley Avenue, Spondon, Derby DE2 7DU, UK
Andrew England, F1/96, South Road, Torrensville, SA 5031, Australia
Paul Gardner, Route 1, Box 2338, Newfane, VT 05345-9734, USA
Conrad von Metzke, 4374 Donald Avenue, San Diego, CA 92117, USA
Theo Clarke, 98 Choumert Road, London, SE15 4AX, UK

GM: Brian Longstaff, 13 Woodfarm Drive, Sheffield, S. Yorks S6 5LW, UK

Brian should be contacting you all shortly with the proper gamestart announcement. Conrad, could you send maps to Andrew and Paul? I expect Brian will make sure that Mark and Theo have the maps as well.

IM JUST ASYMPTOM OF THE MORAL DECAY THAT'S GNAWING AT THE HEART OF THE COUNTRY IM JUST ASYMP TO

Thanks to those of you who suggested variants for me to GM. I'm tempted to give up on Stab and try Deluge or Excalibur instead. We'll see.

BRAISED CELERY

GAMESTART!

Dwarves: Doug Rowling, 228 Kinnell Avenue, Cardonald, Glasgow G52 3RU, Scotland

Elves: Cathy Ozog, PO Box 5225, Munds Park, AZ 86017, USA

Gandalf: Paul Gardner, Route 1, Box 2338, Newfane, VT 05345-9734, USA

Gondor: Iain Bowen, 2 Elderberry Close, Norton, Stourbridge, W. Midlands, DY8 3JN, UK

Mordor: Rod Walker, 1273 Crest Drive, Encinitas, CA 92024, USA

Rohan: Doug Brown, PO Box 584, Penngrove, CA 94951-0584, USA

Saruman: Richard Biddle, 4/27 Tor Road, Dee Why NSW 2099, Australia

Umbar: Mark Lilleleht, PO Box 3166, Charlottesville, VA 22903-0166, USA

GM: Simon Billenness, 630 Victory Blvd. Apt. 6F, Staten Island, NY 10301, USA

Hello and welcome. My thanks to Mark Lilleleht and Paul Gardner for providing preference lists so promptly. Only three of you received your first choice but since five of you put Mordor first, what do you expect? Six of you got your first or second choice, one the third, and one the fourth.

Rules: We will be using the "Definitive" Downfall rules as produced for Denver Glont by Glover Rogerson and John Norris. This appeared in ECU 2. I've enclosed an extra copy for those who didn't receive that issue. Feel free to request another. Please make sure that you are using the correct rules now.

Deadline: Saturday, July 30th 1988 - Afteryule I 3019

The deadline is extra-long since the first season's diplomacy is usually very active. Besides, if it was a seven-weeker it would fall in the middle of my vacation in Britain. I will accept orders at World Dip Con!!!

PRESS

BARAD-DUR (5 Maggotmash [Afteryule] 3019): The aftermath of the Yule Office Party at Mordor GHQ: Darkness. And, in the darkness, the tangled, semi-catatonic, totally wasted bodies of Orcs, Easterlings, Southrons, Black Dwarves, Even Blacker Numenoreans, Giants, Goblins, Trolls, Dunlendings, Gnomes, Vampires, Werewolves, Ghouls, Mewlips, Witches, Wicked Stepmothers, Gorgons, Mantichores, Demons, Democrats, and all manner of foul and filthy dregs from the pits of ... oh, you know: the Bad Guys. Anyway, finally in the stillness something stirs. Something huge and sinister slouches more or less on the Dark Throne. Suddenly -- an eye opens! A single, horrifying red Eye! It is the Eye of Sauron!!

"Gotta keep the other two closed," He thinks. "Gotta stay in character," He tells Himself. "Gotta take something for this hangover," He says. Rising fitfully, He stumbles over to the wet bar and downs a soothing combination of a half-dozen cyanide tablets and a beaker of nitric acid. He belches gently, the breeze knocking over a Giant who had partially revived and was standing up (sort of). "Ah," He breathes, setting fire to the fur of whatever was on top of a nearby pile of bodies, "that's better. I wonder what time it is." Holding His watch under the glow of His great red Eye, Sauron opened one of the others to take a peek.

A word about Sauron's watch, perhaps the most unusual timepiece in all Middle-earth. It consists of a single moving part: an Elf with one arm significantly shorter than the other. It was this Elf's job to lie inside the case and point out the time -- keeping track of same by never-endingly counting off the seconds: "One-Thangorodrim, two-Thangorodrim, three-Thangorodrim, ... sixty-Thangorodrim, one-Thangorodrim ...". (In those days they didn't have hippopotamusesessesesses, you know.) Anyway, Sauron inspected His watch. "Hmmmm. The big hand is on 12 and the little hand is on 11. It must be 11 p.m."

"A.m., Your Extreme Malevolence," piped up the Elf. He did these things because he knew what would happen to him if he didn't.

"The 5th of Aft ... uh, Maggotmash, Your Incredibly Nastiness," said the Elf.

"Tarnation," screamed Sauron. (Well, that isn't really what He screamed, but if you still have any illusions that this 'zine can be shown to others without completely screwing up your reputation, we'd prefer not to shatter them at this point.) "I haven't fed my Pit Monsters in days!" Seating Himself on the Dark Throne, the Master of All Evil and Then Some pulled back a secret lever. Immediately the entire floor of the Throne Room gave way, precipitating all its besotted occupants into the terrible depths below. (The Dark Throne, of course, was elevated on a pillar which rose out of the aforementioned terrible depths below.) For quite a while after that, it was pretty noisy, what with cries of, "Hey, what's going ... Aiyeeeeeee!" and the snapping of teeth (and other snappy things), the rending of flesh, the crunching of bones, ... well, you know. Of course, right away the noble Sauron felt remorse. "I feel remorse," He said. "Those poor things must've been just starved.

I can always get a new GHQ staff, but those Pit Monsters are irreplaceable. Pure Morgot vintage, and they don't make 'em like that any more."

Sauron pushed the lever again, and the floor came back into place. A few of his former guests had managed to cling to it by nail, tooth, claw, sucker, or whatever. Now they scampered off, trying to look as inconspicuous as possible.

After a few moments' meditation (punctuated by more comments we really can't print here), Sauron rang for his Chief Slave. "Sure hope Bilgenest wasn't in one of those piles," He thought. Amazingly, the thought contained a certain degree of sincerity.

Luckily, Bilgenest hadn't been dropped to the Pit Monsters. In a few moments, his dark-robed but totally wimpy figure appeared before Sauron. The Chief Slave had several of the burned-out torches replaced with fresh tar-dipped Gondorians, and surveyed the premises while the screams were dying down. "Well, Your Humongous Horridness," he finally said, "I can't believe you cleaned out the place Yourself." Then some faint residual sloshing and crunching reached his ears. "Oh," he smiled; "breakfast for the pets."

"Exactly. Well, Bilgenest, tell me; what have the Elves been up to lately?"

"Good."

"I was afraid of that," Sauron remarked.

I wonder what the Brits will make of American Golden Age press...

Since "Braised Celery" is going to be run to independent deadlines, I wasn't planning to reprint it in ECU. However, I do think Rod's press deserves a wider audience and the game could always use a little extra exposure.

It seems that Downfall is finally taking off in America. I hear that games have filled in Perelandra and Hagalil Hamaarvi. I've had a couple of Americans write to me recently asking about openings in other zines.

Just as Glover Rogerson is the centre of the Downfall sub-hobby in Britain, I can see I shall have to appoint myself Grand Poohbah of the Downfall sub-hobby in North America (subject, of course, to a full anointing by The Great Rogerson at World Dip Con). In any case, in my (acting) capacity, in response to a petition from Randy Grigsby for another game, I have instructed Cathy Ozog to open a list for Downfall in Cathy's Ramblings. Anybody who missed out on this game (like Mark Weseman or Jason Bergmann) should drop a line to Cathy.

Cathy Ozog, PO Box 5225, Munds Park, AZ 86017, USA

Playlist: REM, Reckoning, Murmur, Lifes Rich Pageant, Husker Du, Candy Apple Gray, Warehouse - Songs and Stories, Matt Johnson, Burning Blue Soul, Talking Heads, Naked, The Cure, Kiss Me... and probably some other stuff I forgot about...

LETTUCE

((Last issue I seem to remember that I threatened to print all the letters I had received recently in response to my article on vegetarianism. Here they are in all their glory...))

Andrew England Good, you and Barbara are vegetarians. I do it for all the reasons you do except "empowerment". I don't know but that one has never been important to me. If people want to eat meat, that's OK. It's just that I don't want to be responsible for killing an animal, I don't want to be unhealthy, and I will eat meat rather than be a big inconvenience to someone whom I visit.

((We make no secret of our vegetarianism, so when we visit people they usually have the good grace to prepare something vegetarian or allow us to bring our own food. We will eat fish & seafood when we go out but nowadays I'd rather eat nothing if the only choice is between red meat and poultry.))

mark lew hypothetical question: a couple has a hereditary disease and they know for certain that any child they have will have the disease and will prematurely die of it. if this couple practices birth control, does that constitute saving a life?

the point i'm trying to make is that your vegetarianism hasn't really saved four cows, as you claimed. you seem to be familiar with how factory farming works, so surely you must realize there is no such thing as an unplanned pregnancy there. cattle are bred at a rate determined by the administrators of the farm. when you stop eating meat, you reduce the demand for meat by four cows. and thus the farm industry will choose to cause the birth of approximately (depending on how accurately they anticipate demand, etc) four fewer cows than it otherwise would have. the fact that there are four - or even four thousand - fewer cows in the system, doesn't change the fact that each and every cow already in the system is going to live unpleasantly and be slaughtered.

i don't doubt your vegetarianism gives you satisfaction in many other ways, but if you really think vegetarianism improves the life of even one cow you are fooling yourself. even if we all stopped eating meat, what would happen? would all the cows go pursue an elysian lifestyle in the fields of south dakota? no, they just wouldn't breed any more cows.

although in this case, it seems to be harmless enough, i must say i'm a little disturbed by your exhortation "don't just sit there. do something constructive." i just think it's all too easy to get caught up in the moral imperative of doing something that distinctions of constructiveness and destructiveness get lost.

((Really? From my perspective the main problem is helping people find the motivation to seek change. Too many people, I feel, just agonise over whether they can make a difference and end up doing nothing. Even more people can't even be bothered at all. Maybe the situation looks different in Berkeley.)

I realise I must have been imprecise when I said in my article that Barbara and I had "saved" four cows by abstaining from eating meat. Of course we don't believe that, by our actions, four cows were yanked off the factory farm production line and are now enjoying the good life grazing in some bovine retirement home.

((By giving up beef we have reduced the annual demand for red meat by approximately two cows a year. Since factory farm managers keep a close eye on demand for their "products" (as you rightly point out), we can assume that over the years less cows will enter the system of factory farm system. Since, as you note, "each and every cow already in the system is...going to live unpleasantly and be slaughtered", we have saved two cows from being born and being forced to go through the constant pain and degradation of factory farming. For this reason alone, I feel we have acted constructively and humanely. The improvements in our health and the environment as a whole are a useful extra.

To return to your hypothetical question, I think you've missed the point, but, no, I don't think the couple in question have saved a life. To use a more appropriate analogy, I feel Barbara and I have made a small contribution to reducing the total sum of animal suffering, just as birth control advocates have reduced the total sum of human suffering in over-populated areas of the world.))

Mark Berch I'm not much persuaded by your vegetarianism arguments, which I'll take in turn.

1. Moral. It's at least debatable whether there is any moral difference between killing a chicken and killing a potato. True, the romantic view of farming is inaccurate, at least in this country. Animals are crops, and the process is pushed by a drive toward efficiency. But we have seedless grapes which cannot reproduce themselves. Corn is planted far closer to each other than would ever occur in nature, much the same way chickens are kept unnecessarily close. Moreover, this argument applies only to raised meat. It doesn't apply to netted fish or birds shot, etc.

((It's certainly debatable. However, for me at least, the debate is clinched by the fact that the chicken feels pain and the potato does not. Let's take an example. Suppose we were both holidaying together in the country one summer. One evening we were given the choice of wringing a chicken's neck or cutting up vegetables for a soup. What would you think would be the most moral choice?

Incidentally, I don't think I was sufficiently clear about my objections to meat-eating. My main argument is not that it is unnatural, even though our inability to digest meat safely is at the root of many of our modern ailments such as heart disease. My principal objection is that meat production, especially modern factory farming, is cruel, degrading and inhumane.))

2. "We are not made to eat meat". True, our digestive system much more closely resembles that of herbivores than carnivores, but then again, "man was not meant to fly" was heard often in the early airplane era. The current thinking (based on the analysis of micro-scratches on teeth) is that man has always eaten meat, at least as far back as we have been able to recover teeth. Man's digestive tract is probably not much different than it was in the days prior to agriculture, as agriculture is only tens of thousands of years old, I believe. Prior to that, and especially prior to legume agriculture, it would have been very difficult for early man to get enough protein. Keep in mind that unlike many herbivores, we cannot eat ordinary cellulose e.g. we cannot graze grass. It is very difficult to imagine pre-agriculture man as being non-carnivorous, and I don't think there's been enough time since then for the dietary tract to have evolved.

3. Cholesterol. This is really an argument against eating too much of the wrong kind of meat, rather than eating meat at all. Many people are constitutionally capable of consuming huge amounts of cholesterol while keeping the same cholesterol levels shown by the typical vegan. We would die with no cholesterol (which we make ourselves). The trick is to avoid too much.

4. Fiber. Sure fiber is important, vital, but eating some meat doesn't mean you can't get the right amount of fiber. This is in essence an argument against an all-meat diet.

5. Calcium. This is a very confused matter. Ca is abundant on both sides, but availability is unclear. The best source of calcium is dairy products. Yes, too much protein can make calcium absorption go out of wack --- more and more evidence suggests this. But again, that's just an argument against too much meat.

6. Calories. Same story here. You can get the correct calory count while eating some meat, and you can overeat on a vegetarian diet simply by overdoing sweets. Meats are calorically dense, but then again, so are beans.

7. Food poisoning. I'm sorry to tell you, but you can get botulism from vegetables too. You can get aflatoxin from peanuts, grapes are sprayed etc. True, some things are used with animals which don't appear in plants, but then again, animal products are inspected much more carefully than plant products. //

There is on the health side, the question of omega-3 oils found in fish. There is increasing evidence that these have an anti-cholesterol effect, and this may even take place in people who don't eat any form of animal products.

And finally, there is the B-12 controversy. As I assume you are aware, B-12 is an essential vitamin, but is not found in plant products. None. The human body produces its own B-12 (we are, after all, animals) but nutritionists do not agree on the question of whether everyone (or even most people) produce enough B-12 for maximum efficiency in the body.

((Mark, sorry for taking your letter out of sequence here, but I want to take your health-related arguments as a whole.

Unfortunately, I didn't make it clear in my article which reason I felt was most important. I'm not vegetarian because I'm paranoid about food poisoning or because I'm too cheap to pay high prices for beef. For me, the moral reason is paramount.

To turn to your first point, I'm sure that there is plenty of evidence that early man ate some meat. However this doesn't mean that our bodies function best with an omnivorous diet. I'm sure our ancestors used to hack out rotten teeth with stone knives, but we wouldn't wish to follow suit nowadays; we would go to a dentist. Similarly, although early man was probably forced to supplement his diet with meat, we have no need to follow the example. Nowadays with supermarkets offering all types of fruit & vegetables all year round, there is no need for us to eat meat at all.

As regards calcium, fiber, cholesterol, calories and food poisoning you make some interesting points. It would be very easy to get bogged down with specifics, so pardon me if I choose to gloss over the details. However your general drift seems to be that, yes, a vegetarian diet has some marginal advantages but that those same advantages could be enjoyed by anyone who eats meat in moderation and pays attention to eating properly.

Again I should have made it clear in my article that, as far as I was concerned, the health benefits of vegetarianism are merely a fortuitous extra. I don't eat meat on moral grounds, although I will also cite health reasons as additional back-up in arguments and to defuse the myth that vegetarianism is actually detrimental to one's health. Consequently, even if I accepted the drift of your argument that a vegetarian diet is no healthier than an informed omnivorous diet, the omnivorous diet is not an option for me.))

8. Ecological Reasons. This reason is entirely valid, although it doesn't apply to non-endangered forms of non-raised animals such as tuna etc.

9. Pocketbook. Don't kid yourself. The cheapest form of protein is powdered milk. Moreover, poultry is often so inexpensive (I can often get it for less than 60¢ a pound) that it's hardly much different from dried beans, and tofu runs more than that in most cases.

((Actually by eating most types of tuna, you are participating in the killing of dolphins. Dolphins tend to swim in waters where tuna is fished and they are often caught in nets, injured and killed. I must admit to having occasionally broken down and eaten tuna salad. However the fact about the dolphins has broken me of the Habit.

If the ecological reasons I gave for becoming vegetarian are valid, as you say, would those reasons be sufficient for you to give up meat? If not, why not? Actually I'm not trying to be confrontational here, but I would be interested to hear your reasons.

I'll back off a little on the pocketbook issue and say that a meat-centred diet can be just as cheap as a vegetarian diet. However I will make the claim that a vegetarian diet offers better nutrition dollar for dollar than an omnivorous one.))

Gavin Begbie Congratulations, it was good to see a fellow Dip player who is also a vegetarian. If I could I would like to expand on some of the issues about the devouring of dead animal flesh you raise.

There is an excellent book out at the moment in Australia and England by Peter Cox, titled "Why you don't need meat". Cox plunges us into a bewildering series of connections between meat-eating and a host of degenerative diseases. In a chapter entitled "Connections" he exposes the powerful relationship existing between the drug companies and the meat industry and how their combined strength has coerced numerous governments into suppressing information to the general public. He details the use of antibiotics and growth promotants in meat production and the legacy of salmonella poisoning this has left. Cox leaves the question of how many and to what extent our modern diseases and allergies are caused by the continual use of toxins in meat production.

He also questions the mass slaughter of animals, a process in which one and a half million animals are killed daily. In another chapter entitled "The baby that eats five people", he explains how meat consumption in the West is directly related to starvation in developing nations. In Central America, for instance, people resort to destroying vast areas of rainforest in order to grow cheap beef for the North American fast food market while their own people starve for want of grain. This process (cynically called 'hamburgerisation') in turn destroys habitats for native fauna and created deserts of once fertile forest.

Apparently, last year I read that there was a national boycott of "Burger King" hamburgers in the States, which thankfully lead to a sales drop of 11%, which was quite a success as "Burger King" once purchased 70% of Costa Rica's beef exports. (Costa Rica, not bigger than 50,000 square miles, has 758 bird and 8000 plant species - with more than 1000 orchid species.)

((You may be pleased to know that the Burger King boycott was a success and the company has now pledged to stop buying rainforest beef.))

Another good book I would highly recommend is "Fit For Life" by Marilyn & Harvey Diamond. A good book for anyone who wants to make a gradual change from meat-eating to vegetarianism. Harvey Diamond has a look at the physiological aspects of meat-eating. "A carnivore's teeth are long, sharp and pointed - all of them! We have molars for crushing and grinding. A carnivore's jaw moves up and down only, for tearing and biting. Ours move from side to side for grinding. A carnivore's saliva is acid and geared to the digestion of animal protein; it lacks ptyalin for the digestion of starches; our saliva is alkaline and contains ptyalin. A carnivore's stomach is a simple round sack that secretes ten times more hydrochloric acid than that of a non-carnivore. Our stomachs are oblong in shape, complicated in structure, and convoluted with a duodenum. A carnivore's intestines are three times the length of its trunk, designed for rapid expulsion of food stuff, which quickly rots. Our intestines are twelve times the length of our trunks and designed to keep food in them until all the nutrients are extracted. The liver of a carnivore is capable of eliminating ten to fifteen times more uric acid than the liver of a non-carnivore. Our livers have the capacity to eliminate only a small amount of uric acid. Uric acid is an extremely dangerous toxic substance that can wreak havoc in your body. All meat consumption releases large amounts of uric acid into the system. Unlike carnivores and most omnivores humans do not have the enzyme uricase to break down uric acid. A carnivore does not sweat through the skin and has no pores. We do sweat through the skin and have pores. A carnivore's urine is acid. Ours is alkaline. A carnivore's tongue is rough. Ours is smooth. Our hands are perfectly designed for plucking fruit from a tree, not for tearing the guts out of the carcass of a dead animal as are carnivore's claws.

There is not one anatomical faculty the human being has that would indicate that it is equipped for tearing, ripping and rendering flesh for consumption. //

I currently live on a diet of sprouts, vegetables and fruits (mostly juiced) and only indulge in cooked meals three times a week. I fast one day a week, and have two fruit days a week. I grow my own vegetables and sprouts and buy the fruit (organically grown).

((Thanks very much for the letter, Gavin. It's unexpected and fascinating letters such as this which make zine editing worth while.

There's not much I can add to this well-argued letter. Concerning your diet, you seem to be more of the macrobiotic/vegan school. Barbara is more of a junk-food vegetarian: strictly non-meat but plenty of chocolate and ice-cream! Our cuisine is mostly ethnic: lots of Mexican beans & rice, Indian and Chinese dishes and a smattering of Italian. Barbara makes a pretty mean & spicy spaghetti sauce. We tried a macrobiotic restaurant once which Barbara found very bland and uninteresting. I would like to gradually go vegan but so far I've only managed to occasionally shift from dairy products to soy milk and cheese. More details next issue.))

Mark Lilleleht Re (Vegetarianism): All very good reasons. The problem?

I don't think I'd make it without my weekly beef/pork chicken fix. And this probably won't change until I've got to go out back with a hatchet and slaughter my dinner.

((Don't forget that you're talking to somebody who, as a kid, wouldn't eat any vegetables except peas and carrots. Even in her first year of college, Barbara was still protesting that she could never give up her meat. If people can give up smoking or heroin, meat eaters should be able to go cold turkey without too much trouble. As I was explaining to Bruce Linsey the other day, I used to love such stuff as chicken salad, paté and pastrami. However, after only a few months of vegetarianism, I completely lost my enthusiasm for them. You'd be surprised how quickly and how radically your tastes in food can change.))

As regards my striving for a non-cutesy/non-feuding zine, I more than expect that an editor can produce a controversial yet non-feuding zine. After all, feuding does seem to spring more from conflicts of personality than of ideologies or beliefs. If a discussion turns into strong debate I'm glad; but if that debate turns into name calling than I'm surely disappointed in the participants. I hope that The Scribblerist's letter column can become "incisive and, indeed, controversial" to use your words. A good argument is a stimulus for fresh ideas and extra thinking not agitation and childishness. Right now SDI is getting off the ground as a very interesting letter column topic so we'll see. I really just don't understand why people should hate other people because they see someone giving out "bogus" numbers to variant games, but, hey, that's life.

((One problem you may find is that most personality conflicts in the hobby are hidden by alleged conflicts of principle. For instance I've noticed Dick and Julie Martin argue fervently against polls in general (and the Runestone Poll in particular) but I can't help feeling that their main motivation is not the issues (such as they are) but their personal dislike of Bruce Linsey. I suppose I could give other examples but I could find myself in deeeeeep water....))

Jason Bergmann Thank you for sending me a sample issue of your publication
// From what I can tell you only run variant games.

Is that the case? Since I am a "novice" in the activity of postal diplomacy, many of the variants played are unfamiliar to me. Thank you for sending the rules for Stab. Maybe one of these days, someone will send me the rules for Gunboat and I'll have a clue as to what that is. Or maybe I should write to the Variant Bank..

((Actually I run more than just variants. There's an opening for international (regular) Dip and there's always Railway Rivals which is another game completely. Most of the variants will be unfamiliar because, apart from Cline, they're all British designs and therefore either rare or unobtainable in the USA (apart from in ECU). I'll gladly send you the rules for any variant in ECU, if you're interested. Gunboat is simply a variant where the players identities are only known to the GM. There's no diplomacy involved except through the press. That's it! Since the hobby for me is about writing and receiving letters, I find Gunboat totally pointless...))

Cathy Ozog You know - you were to ignore the Bad Boys! Here I was being so good and ignoring them and then you go and goof it all up! You might even be turning into a Bad Boy!

((No chance of that. I mean, I actually like people! I really should ignore but they're such a tempting target. Talk about shooting fish in a barrel... Besides it cheers up Mike Hopcroft.))

AS THE POUND IN YOUR POCKET TURNS INTO A DOLLAR...

Issue 2

Summer 1988

This is the subzine of the International Subscription Exchange: a hobby service for the transfer of monies across the Atlantic. It will appear every six months with luck. It can be distributed and reproduced by anyone in theory, though, in practice, only Doug Rowling bothers. It is produced by Simon Billenness, 630 Victory Blvd Apt 6F, Staten Island, NY 10301, USA. Now wasn't that colophon untidy?

For those of you who haven't heard of the ISE, I'll recap what it does. It exists to help hobbyists who would like to subscribe to zines from across the Atlantic. For instance, if you're American and you would like to subscribe to the British zine Greatest Hits, all you have to do is send a cheque in dollars to myself. Tell me what the money is for and whether you would like to receive the zine airmail or seamail. (To compare, airmail is fast - 3 to 10 days - but usually twice as expensive as ordinary domestic mail. Seamail is cheaper but letters can take over a month.) I will then inform Doug of your request. When your request arrives, doug will check the exchange rate for that day, convert the sum into pounds and send the editor concerned your sub money. The service takes a couple of weeks but it saves you the ridiculous fees which banks charge you for changing small amounts of cash.

The service is running pretty smoothly at present. During the year I've been in charge, roughly \$400 has been transferred in both directions. Also I have teamed up with Andrew England to extend the ISE between North America and Australia. Next time I'll have statistics for that traffic as well.

STATISTICS FOR THE PERIOD: January 1st to June 30th

	NA to UK	UK to NA
Sub Fees	\$206.00	\$185.60
# Transfers	15	7
# Different Zines	15	5

On the whole, over the last six months British hobbyists have been very limited in their selection of US zines. I wonder why? It's a shame to see that overseas subbers are missing out on such excellent zines as Praxis, The Zine Register, Vertigo, Passchendaele and Rebel (to name but a few).

BREAKDOWN BY MONTH

	NA to UK		UK to NA	
	Amount	# Transfers	Amount	# Transfers
January	\$65.00	4	\$3.50	1
February	\$25.00	2	\$52.50	3
March	\$40.00	4	-	-
April	--	-	\$125.96	2
May	\$15.00	2	-	-
June	\$61.00	3	\$3.64	1
TOTAL	\$206.00	15	\$185.60	7

BREAKDOWN BY ZINE

<u>NA Zines and Services</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u># Transfers</u>
PDO Auction	\$74.05	1
Excitement City Unlimited	\$51.80	6
Gonzo Baseball League	\$30.00	1
North American Variant Bank	\$17.50	1
Costaguana	\$12.25	1

<u>UK Zines and Services</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u># Transfers</u>
Prisoners of War	\$43.00	4
War & Peace	\$29.00	4
The Yorkshire Gallant	\$26.00	2
Vienna	\$20.00	1
Mad Policy	\$15.00	1
Bohemian Rhapsody	\$10.00	2
Cut & Thrust	\$10.00	1
Denver Glont	\$10.00	1
Gallimaufrey	\$9.00	1
Masters of the Prime	\$9.00	1
Ode	\$9.00	1
The Five Year Plan	\$5.00	1
Zine Bank	\$5.00	1
Mission From God	\$3.50	2
NERTZ	\$2.50	1

Prisoners of War continues to lead the field of British zines. But, behold! ECU gets creamed by the PDO Auction! With luck, next time I'll be beat by British contributions to the Diplomacy Alliance Against AIDS. I hope so anyway. ECU aside it seems that British hobbyists principally send money via the ISE to use services or make donations. This is just as well; otherwise there would be no counterbalance to all the real subscriptions which Americans send to British zines...

Your ISE reps are:

Simon Billenness, 630 Victory Blvd. Apt. 6F, Staten Island, NY 10301, USA
Doug Rowling, 228 Kinnell Avenue, CArdonald, Glasgow G52 3RU, United Kingdom

and a warm welcome to:

Andrew England, F1/96 South Road, Torrensville, S.A. 5031, Australia

THATSALLFOLKSTHATSALLFOLKSTHATSALLFOLKSTHATSALLFOLKSTHATSALLFO

Oops! Actually that isn't everything. British hobbyists may be interested to know that Mark Nelson and Andrew England have set up an ISE link between Britain and Australia. I'm not sure whether this is set up and working yet but you could always contact Mark at:

112 Huntley Avenue, Spondon, Derby DE2 7DU, United Kingdom

To clear up one final point, British hobbyists can subscribe to Canadian zines through the ISE. Even though Bruce McIntyre has been dropped as the Canadian ISE rep, I'm quite capable of transferring money to Canadian editors, since Canadian banks regularly process US cheques. Consequently if you want to sub to such excellent Canadian zines as Excelsior, Praxis, Passchendaele, Hagalil Hamaarvi and Northern Flame, just send your money to Doug Rowling as normal.

FROM

SIMON BILLENNESS & BARBARA PASSOFF

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YOUR CREDIT IS: TRADE

Larry Perry

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■ Duke Goes Soft on Sex?

The right wing's researchers have begun to dig into Michael Dukakis's past. And one group thinks it has already struck gold. The Ad Hoc Committee in Defense of Life, an antiabortion group, announces in its newsletter the discovery that Dukakis, as a young Massachusetts legislator, introduced bills to repeal "Laws Punishing Unnatural and Lascivious Acts with Another Person," the "Law Prohibiting Fornication" and the "Law Punishing Blasphemy." This "unbelievable record," the group crows, "ought to catch up with him."

DEADLINE: Saturday August 13th 1988